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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Pacific literature represents one of many bodies of new literatures written in English that have emerged from cultures of former colonies of European empires (contact literatures). They contain a blend of two or more linguistic contexts and a range of discourse devices and cultural assumptions distinct from the ones associated with native varieties of English. Two recent novels by Patricia Grace, "Cousins" (1992) and "Baby No-Eyes" (1998) exploit such linguistic adaptations of standard English as untranslated words in the indigenous language and Maori speech patterns. Grace creates innovative narrative voices and structures to tell her stories in ways that reflect Maori experiences and expectations. Grace's novels reveal a number of features of bilinguals' creativity. Close examination of some of these features and the effects they have on analyses of interpretations of the literature highlights the limitations of a European literacy theory in explicating and evaluating literature written by bilinguals in a bilingual society. By exploiting creative innovations in her use of English as well as innovations in traditional Eurocentric fiction's narrative voice and structure, Grace creates an expression of Maori life and values in language that is only obliquely related to the standard English of the colonizers. (Contains 30 references.) (SM)

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Bilinguals' Creativity: Patricia Grace and Maori culture and values

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Bilinguals' Creativity: Patricia Grace and Maori culture and values

Contemporary Pacific literature represents one of a number of bodies of new literatures written in English that have emerged from cultures of former colonies of European empires. These literatures have been characterized as contact literatures by Kachru (1985). The concept of contact literatures is an extension of *contact languages*. A language in contact with another is two-faced. It has its own face and the face it acquires from the languages with which it has contact. Such is the character of contact literatures written in English. They contain a blend of two or more linguistic contexts and a range of discourse devices and cultural assumptions that are distinct from the ones associated with native varieties of English.

These literatures have occasioned debate among linguists, literary critics, and teachers regarding their place in the literary canon and their value as texts suitable for study in the classroom (see e.g. Quirk & Widdowson,1985; Fiedler & Baker,1981; Dasenbrock,1987; Bhabha,1984; Tawake,1990; Sowell,1999; Subramani,1985). A number of states in the U.S. have adopted requirements for state-wide, end-of-course testing in the public schools that focuses on literature from non-western cultures (Educational Testing Service, 2000). The reason usually given for studying such literatures in the classroom is that in the process students learn about cultures and values other than their own. But students may also gain perspective on how writers from outside the inner circle of societies that use English as a primary language have adapted English for their own purposes. Kachru has characterized these adaptations as the bilingual's creativity (1986) and has designated among other things stylistic and linguistic innovations in literary texts written by bilingual writers as an area of research that needs further investigation (see Kachru 2000). The outcome of such research, in addition to revealing the workings of the bilingual's code repertoire, may also promote emancipation from cultural and

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linguistic enthnocentricism that has marked both linguistic and literary studies in the past (see e.g. Ashcroft, Griffiths,& Tiffin, 1989). Studies of bilinguals' creativity may also promote the use of postcolonial literary theories as appropriate perspectives from which to examine contact literatures in the new millennium (Tawake,2000).

The idea of a postcolonial literary theory emerged from the inability of Europeon theory to deal adequately with complexities and varied cultural contexts of postcolonial writing. Leading postcolonial theorists generally agree that the common ground they share is their response to the depiction of the colonized as always situated as "other" and unable to assume the necessary role as self. Prominent postcolonial theorists include Edward Said (1978); Homi K Bhabha (1984); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1987); and the "Empire Writes Back" school that includes Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (1989). The Empire Writes Back takes its name from Salman Rushdie's piece "The Empire Strikes Back with a Vengeance," and emphasizes what it terms "hybridization," through which indigenous traditions combine with imperial remnants to create something newly postcolonial.

By examining contact literatures from the perspective of the creativity with which the bilingual/multilingual writers have adapted Standard English for their own purposes, we focus on those very elements of hybridization that postcolonial theorists emphasize and address. These elements include the postcolonial rejection of a simplistic insider point of view that is privileged or "authentic" in Sharrad's terms (1993:1) because it emanates from a native or "insider" vision. Postcolonial critic Trinh T Minh-ha (1995:218) expresses the rationale for such a rejection,

> For there can hardly be such a thing as an essential inside that can be homogeneously represented by all insiders;...questions like "How loyal a representative of his/her people is s/he?" (the filmmaker as insider), or "How

> authentic is his/her representation of the culture observed?" (the filmmaker as outsider) are of little relevance. When the magic of essences ceases to impress and intimidate, there no longer is a position of authority from which one can definitely judge the verisimilitude value of the representation..."I" is not unitary, culture has never been monolithic...Differences do not only exist between outsider and insider--two entities--they are also at work within the outsider or the insider--a single entity.

Another element of hybridization addressed by postcolonial theory that is uncovered or highlighted by studies of bilinguals' creativity is an emphasis on the use of variant dialects of English to express the importance of practice--the way language is actually used by speakers in the society--over the standardized code. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989:7-8) make the point that one of the main features of imperial control in the colonies was through language,

> The imperial education system installs a standard version of the imperial language as norm and marginalizes all variants and impurities. Language then becomes the medium through which imperial power is perpetuated. However, such power is rejected when an effective postcolonial voice emerges." (7-8)

Several writers from the Pacific publishing fiction in the 1970's represent the beginnings of just such a postcolonial voice, one that exhibits linguistic adaptations in the use of English in order to convey its writers' cultures and identities in a language different than the Standard English used by colonizers. Best known among fiction writers from the Pacific are Albert Wendt (Samoan), Patricia Grace (Maori), and Witi Ihimaera (Maori). These writers have incorporated untranslated words in an indigenous language into their literary texts [see Tawake (2000) and Ihimaera & Long (1982)]. Albert Wendt used detailed accounts of Pacific island characters' use of non-verbal strategies for communication in his novel *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979) e.g. see Tawake (1991). And Patricia Grace's story "Parade" (1975) develops a metaphor of seeing through the eyes of outsiders or taking the point of view of non-Pacific islanders as a means of

conveying the outsider condition of island people who have been silenced or made invisible through the influence of a colonizing presence in their islands (Tawake, 2000). These works seem to be amenable to explication from the perspective of postcolonial theory.

Two recent novels published by Patricia Grace in the 1990's *Cousins* (1992) *and Baby No-Eyes* (1998) exploit some of the same linguistic adaptations of Standard English as her earlier work (and the work of other Pacific island writers) including untranslated words in the indigenous language and Maori speech patterns. In addition to using untranslated Maori words and Maori speech patterns in her new novels, Grace also creates innovative narrative voices and structures to tell her stories in ways that reflect Maori experience and expectations. Grace's narrators and the structures of their narratives mimic the way that the older Maori had of telling a story and mark that story's deviation from the linear form of beginning, middle, and end that is characteristic of traditional Eurocentric fiction. For discussions of ways in which non-western organizational structures differ from Eurocentric linear structures , see Kaplan (1966), Ostler (1987), and Ferdman, Weber, and Ramirez (1994). Grace creates Maori voices in her recent fiction to express on the psychic level the differences between Maori and Pakeha in their attitudes toward land, ancestors, family, cycles of life and death, and regeneration.

In *Baby No-Eyes*, Shane, the father of Te Paania's unborn child takes his wife home to visit their extended Maori family back in the village. In a powerful exposure of Pakeha ignorance and arrogant cruelty, Grace has Shane's grandmother Gran Kura recount a story from her own childhood, which she tells in response to Shane's outburst against the old folks when he demands to know his Maori name. Shane is obsessed with what has been kept from him, his Maori heritage; he demands to know his Maori name, his *tipuna* name. He says,

> Shane…It's a movie name, a cowboy name…a name for Pakeha, a name for Pakeha teachers to like. To make me be like them. Where's my *tipuna* name? (p.26)

Gran Kura answers him,

> To protect you. Like Riripeti, called Betty. (p.26)

Shane is drunk and rails at his family for attempting to protect him, while Gran Kura tries to pacify him,

> You think I need that? Protection? Not to be real, not to know, have it all hidden?
> You all think you got to whisper in case we hear, in case we know?
> Every generation has its secrets to bear. What good is knowing?
>
> What good nothing? Shane said, 'Nothing, nothing, nothing, alleluia. Look at this black face. Look, look.' Shane step-danced his silly arms and legs, showing us himself, his black face pushed forward in a fury...But what to go with it? Black, but what to go with it? Shane for a name. Shane, Shame, Blame, Tame, Lame, Pain. Nothing to go with this. How can I be Pakeha with this colour, this body, this face, this head, this heart? How can I be Maori without...without...without what? Don't even know without what. Without what?' (p.26-27)

Grace's use of the Maori word *tipuna* (for maternal forebears, Mother or Grandfather in this case) to describe what Shane is demanding from his family performs a function like the function of poetry: it acts out what it names. Literally, what Shane is asking for is his secret family name, the name of the Maori part of him that has been replaced by the Pakeha-friendly name Shane. Figuratively, Grace uses *tipuna* to stand for the whole of Shane's Maori heritage, the mystery of his being that cannot be named in English, something that has been denied him; and the denying ultimately cost him his life since it is the evening of Shane's outburst as he and Te Paania return to Wellington that Shane crashes the car killing himself and and his and Te Paania's unborn child, who becomes the title character of the novel, Baby No-Eyes.

It is in response to Shane's outburst that Gran Kura tells a story from her childhood about her *teina* (little sister, in Maori but in Pakeha categories of relationships, the two girls are

first cousins--the father of one of the girls is the brother to the mother of the other girl). Gran Kura was *tuakana* (big sister, in Maori) to Riripeti (called Betty for Pakeha teachers). In Gran's story, Riripeti was sent to school for the first time in the care of her big sister (cousin), Kura. On the first day at school, the teacher spoke to Riripeti in English asking her who she is, telling her to stand up when she is spoken to. Riripeti did not know what the teacher was saying, did not recognize Betty as her Pakeha name. She was only five. She smiled and looked to her *tuakana* for guidance. The teacher told Riripeti to get the smile off her face that it was no laughing matter. The teacher made Riripeti stand in the corner "until you learn better manners" (p.31). No one was permitted to speak Maori in school, and so Riripeti was marched to the corner and smacked for not following the teacher's orders, none of which she understood.

Every day Riripeti was punished, shaken for not speaking loud enough, for being afraid, for not following the rules. Her *tuakana* was not allowed to speak to her or help her understand what was expected because speaking in Maori was not allowed.

> After a while it was only Riripeti who went to the bad corner. It became her corner. She smelled like an animal and spoke like an animal, had to go to the corner until she stopped being an animal. I could see that she was getting smaller and that it was only her eyes and her teeth that were growing...
>
> Her spirit was out of her, gone roaming. Her hair was as dry as a horse's tail, rough and hard, her eyes were like flat shadows, not at all like eyes. I had seen a dying dog look like that, which made me think it might be true what the teacher said, that my *teina* was changing into an animal (p.34).

One morning, Riripeti sat down by the track on the way to school and said she could not go to school any more. Every day, she would say, 'Kura, Kura, *he puku mamae*, (in Maori, my stomach hurts) and she'd hold her stomach and bend over' (p.33). Riripeti began waiting in the woods until school was over and then returning home with the other children.

The following year after school vacation when Riripeti had somewhat recovered her spirit, Kura was moved out of Riripeti's classroom to a higher grade. On the first day, Riripeti clung to Kura begging her *tuakana* to stay with her. Riripeti was caned in front of the whole school so that everyone would learn how bad it was for them to speak Maori. During her third year in school, Riripeti died. 'Killed by school. Dead of fear' (p.38).

In Gran Kura's story, Grace uses Maori words to express feelings and relationships within characters and within the extended family that have no equivalent in English. In using these untranslated Maori words, Grace emphasizes the difference between Maori family ties and Pakeha relationships. At the psychic and emotional level, Riripeti was more than sister to Kura; she was *teina*.

> My heart broke for my *teina*. Oh I cried. She was mine, she was me, she was all of us. She was the one who died but we were the ones affected, our shame taking generations to become our anger and our madness. She was my charge, my little sister, my work that I'd been given to do, mine to look after (p.38).

Gran Kura's story about Riripeti responds to Shane's demand for his *tipuna* name, and it foreshadows Shane's death later that same evening in the car crash. Much of the power of this episode in the novel derives from Grace's use of Maori words to express what may be inexpressible in English because the psychic experience of life for Maori and for Pakeha is so different. Shane's death, foreshadowed in Gran Kura's story by Riripeti's death, is linked to Gran Kura's story overtly when Gran uses the story to explain why Shane has a cowboy name. But Shane's death in the main plot is linked to Riripeti's death in Gran Kura's story by the same cause of death operating in both narratives. Both characters, Shane and Riripeti, die because they are forced to live apart from their own identities, from their life force, their Maori heritage.

In addition to using untranslated Maori vocabulary and Maori speech patterns in her new novels, Grace also creates innovative narrative voices and structures to tell her stories. These innovations are designed to mimic the way that the older Maori had of telling a story and to mark that story's departure from the linear form of beginning – middle – end that is characteristic of traditional Eurocentric fiction. In *Baby No-Eyes*, Grace seems to call attention to her creative innovations in the story telling process when she says,

> There's a way the older people have of telling a story, a way where the beginning is not the beginning, the end is not the end. It starts from a centre and moves away from there in such widening circles that you don't know how you will finally arrive at the point of understanding, which becomes itself another core, a new centre. You can only trust these tellers as they start you on a blindfold journey with a handful of words which they have seemingly clutched from nowhere...(p.28)

In *Potiki* (1986), Grace alluded to a manner of story telling that seemed to draw the extended family (*whanau*) back together and to help incorporate the members into each others' stories.

> ...stories became, once more, an important part of all our lives, the lives of all the *whanau*. And although the stories all had different voices, and came from different times and places and understandings, though some were shown, enacted or written rather than told, each one was like a puzzle piece which tongued or grooved neatly to one another. And this train of stories defined our lives, curving out from points on the spiral in ever-widening circles from which neither beginnings nor endings could be defined. (p.41)

By commenting on the structure and manner of Maori storytelling and its consequences to the story, Grace calls attention to her own invention of fictional voices and structures to mimic these Maori storytelling patterns in her subsequent novels.

The principal concerns in Grace's novels are family connections or relationships and issues of land ownership. In telling stories about families and land ownership in *Cousins*, Grace uses a deceased unborn child to narrate several chapters. The unborn child is a twin of one of the cousins who form the trio of characters from the same family whose story Grace tells. In *Baby No-Eyes*, an unborn child, Rawera, narrates several chapters from within his mother's (Te Paania's) womb. Rawera's narrative reveals the shadowy presence of another unborn child, a girl, who was killed in an automobile accident that took her father's (Shane's) life and almost killed her mother. The novel takes its name from this unborn, unnamed child, whose body was mutilated at the hospital by Pakeha doctors before the Maori relatives could claim it for burial among the Mother's family dead. When the remains of the unborn child were finally located and given to the family, the eyes were missing, hence the name of the child and the name of the novel, *Baby No-Eyes*.

Just as Grace's use of untranslated Maori vocabulary and Maori speech patterns represented her linguistic innovations in English to express her own experience in a language different than the Standard English used by the colonizers, Grace's use of an unborn child to narrate significant sections of her two most recent novels represents a creative innovation in narrative voice and structure. This innovation emphasizes the Maori connection between the living and the dead, between the past and the present. One of the effects of having an unborn child narrate events in a family's story is to affirm that the bonds of family include the living and the dead and the unborn; these characters are people; they continue to be active, to play

important roles in the lives of their families. They know things that other individuals in the stories do not know. No western fiction with which I am familiar incorporates the voice of an unborn narrator.

On another occasion, Grace creates an innovative narrative voice in *Baby No-Eyes* when she personifies pain. When Te Paania is close to death following Shane's car crash, Pain speaks to her, urging her to hold onto Pain and use it as a ladder to return to life from the depth of the dark, quiet place where Te Paania had been before. At first, Te Paania resists Pain,

> 'No, not you…'
> 'I'm all you have, hold on to me because there's nothing else to hold on to.'
> 'Leave me…'
> 'Can't hold the faces which slip away from you like shadows, can't hold the voices which tremble, shudder and dissolve, can't hold light which is illusory. You need me.'
> 'Not you…'
> 'I'm all you have. Use me as a ladder and you'll find the way.'
> 'Why should I believe you…?'
> 'I'm all you have, hold tight and move up one slow step at a time.' (p.43)

'Three times, Pain reiterates, 'I'm all you have.' Three times Pain urges Te Paania, 'hold on to me.' In creating a voice who embodies pain and who encourages Te Paania to use him as a ladder to rejoin the living, Grace has expressed a profound truth: out of suffering comes understanding, strength, and the making of a new people capable of surviving, capable of regeneration. Pain is all around; it is active like a person; but one must hold on to it like treasure and use it. Grace implies that Maori can survive; they can survive even the deprivation represented by the detachment from Maori heritage. Te Paania climbs back to life

by clutching Pain and climbing it as if it were a ladder, a means of egress from the pure, dark, quiet of death.

Te Paania's interaction with Pain manifests a Maori experience of a drift toward death that is reversed by embracing Pain as the only thing a suffering one can hold. Faces, voices, and light, all external stimuli, slip away; but Pain does not slip away; it lives within and shapes the people who hold on to it to make of them the beginning people, the Maori people of the future, the bone people as they are identified in Keri Hulme's novel by that name.

In both *Cousins* (1992) and *Baby No-Eyes* (1998), Grace uses a narrative structure that imitates a spiral rather than a straight line that follows the beginning – middle – end pattern most western readers expect in fiction. Both novels tell stories that resemble jig-saw puzzles in structure more than they resemble the straight line, cause and effect, motivation-action-reaction to which we are accustomed. In creating distinctly Maori voices to narrate the stories and a spiral pattern to structure their telling (a pattern that recounts events by beginnning in the center and moving away from the center in widening circles of related events), Grace has transcended her earlier adaptations of the SE code at the word level. In the recent novels, she has moved into a realm of narrative transformation that liberates her accounts from the prison house of western expectation. This narrative transformation helps to inform readers with the sense of what it means to be a Maori, what it feels like to live as Maori.

The main characters in *Cousins* are the offspring of three Maori siblings who represent the first generation to leave the village and the old people to live in Auckland and Wellington among strangers. *Cousins* begins within the consciousness of Mata the only one of the three cousins to grow up away from the family. Mata grew up in an orphanage in Auckland. Mata's

mother, Anihera, had run away from home to marry Albert, a European who had deserted from his own country's navy while his ship was in New Zealand. Albert treated Anihera brutally and then turned their child over to a heartless grasping woman who served as Mata's legal guardian when Mata's mother died and Albert returned to Europe.

The opening chapter of *Cousins* is one of two sections of the novel—the first and the last--that are recounted in Mata's voice. The opening section places Mata walking barefoot in the middle of the night in the middle of a recently tarred road in Auckland in a time frame that is near the end of the chronological story of her life and its intersections with the lives of her cousins. Mata's thoughts are represented by strings of words that do not include complete sentences. The strings of words describe her toenails and the names she sees on road signs and advertising banners along the road and in shop windows. Mata focuses on no people, no coherent thoughts; and the fragmentation of grammatical expression represents the fragmentation of Mata's life, which makes no more sense to her than the strings of words she recites to herself as she trudges along the recently tarred road in Auckland. Mata's first narrative represents the beginning point in the center of three intersecting lives, whose stories unfold in the voices of characters whose connections to the cousins are established in the telling , and whose telling moves out away from the beginning point in ever-widening circles to complete the story.

The point in time when the book opens is also near the end of the life of Makareta, the second of the three cousins referred to by the title of the novel who tell the family's story. From a passing bus, Makareta caught sight of Mata as she walked on the recently tarred road in Auckland. After a lifetime of being separated from her mother's family, Mata believed that she

was unloved and unwanted. Makareta's second narrative begins with a description of her encounter with Mata:

> Tonight by street-light our eyes met and knew each other...[Mata's eyes]are family eyes, our eyes knew each other. (p.201)

As a result of this chance encounter, Mata is reunited with Makareta for a few days before Markareta's death, in time for Mata to accompany her cousin's body home and at the same time to effect her own homecoming.

Mata had visited her mother's people once from her orphanage/boarding school when she was 12. Her guardian had allowed her to go only after her family mentioned the land that she could claim through her Maori heritage. During this childhood visit to her mother's home village, Mata met Makareta and her other cousins, including Missy an older daughter of her mother's sister, who is the third cousin referred to by the title. Memories of that childhood visit are interspersed in Mata's first narrative with her fragmented thoughts as she walks along the tarry road with nothing on her mind,

> Gathering the words of road signs and shop names to her to keep thoughts and thinking away (p.25).

This jumble of memories and words with no structure or apparent narrative function mimics the chaos of Mata's life. Mata's story emerges as a narrative of emptiness and waiting, of staring at cracks in walls, and of hoping to have someone of her own, of a marriage that did not satisfy or fill the vacancy in her insides, of a husband who stopped coming home. Finally, after years of nothing, Mata had put on her coat and her shoes, put the photo of her dead mother in her pocket and gone out following her feet, wanting nothing and going nowhere. And it is at this point that the novel opens with the chance glimpse of each other that occurs when Makareta

looks out the window of the bus and sees Mata on the road, and Mata raises her eyes and looks straight at Makareta.

Makareta's first narrative is the second part of the novel, and it includes an account of the family's efforts to find Mata after Anihera died. Makareta's narrative meshes with Mata's--as the pieces in a jig-saw puzzle mesh--in the re-telling of events that led up to Mata's childhood visit to the village. But Makareta's narrative contains a wider sweep than Mata's narrative, encompassing details of the family's life and trials of twenty years earlier.

Makareta's first narrative is told partly in the voice of her mother, Polly, who had married Rere the elder son of the family, and partly in her own voice. Makareta had been reared by the old people when her own mother Polly had returned to Auckland after Rere was killed in the war overseas. Makareta was taught all the people's ways: she attended their gatherings for death, for land discussion, or for court hearings to do with land, always travelling with the old ones. She had been designated by her great grandmother to be the promised one, the daughter whose marriage to the son of another Maori family would bind the land and the families' destinies together. But Makareta refused to marry at her family's bidding. She chose to leave the village before the celebration began that had been prepared to announce her marriage.

Makareta's narrative intersects with that of the third cousin, Missy, at the juncture when Makareta chose not to marry as her family wished. Missy stepped forward to marry in Makareta's place. She declared that she wanted to be the one; and she waited to see if the old ones would sing for her. When Grandmother Keita put the feather cloak around her shoulders, the people sang for her, and she became the one. Missy's first narrative is told in the second person, by her dead twin brother who was never born, as if he is recounting the story of her life. The same events that Mata remembered from her childhood visit that were re-told from the

point of view of Makareta and Polly in Makareta's narrative are told again in Missy's narrative by her never-born twin.

Both of Grace's recent novels emphasize the power that accompanies seeing through a particular pair of eyes, Maori eyes. When Makareta, in *Cousins* (1992), chastised her grandmother Kui Hinemata for speaking Maori to the children where she might be overheard by their teachers, who did not allow the children to speak Maori at school, she had clearly taken the eyes of the Pakeha. Makareta says, "They'll hear you Kui. You're not allowed." Kui responds, "Maybe that's right for you, Daughter, but this old woman speaks her very own language wherever she is, wherever she goes. Otherwise, who is she?...Don't be angry Makareta." The unborn twin of Missy who is recounting this episode reports to Missy, "You said goodbye to Kui, but Makareta hurried away without looking at her or speaking" (p. 179).

Kui Hinemata's response to Makareta's warning that she should speak English emphasizes the power of language to define and identify its speakers. Makareta's attitude of impatience with her grandmother clearly shows that Makareta has taken the eyes of the outside world through which to view her grandmother's use of Maori. However, in Makareta's second narrative she comments on the consequences to those of her people "who had learned to look at who they were in distorted mirrors, had seen awry reflections of themselves and had become traumatised." (p.208) Again Grace emphasizes Makareta's growth and development of wisdom by having Makareta realize the power inherent in the eyes that do the seeing.

In this sequence, Makareta embraces the vision of her Pakeha teachers in the way they regard the children speaking Maori when she tells her grandmother not to speak Maori, and later she emphasizes the distortion and trauma that result when her people look at themselves with the eyes of outsiders. This insight of Makareta's based on her own experience echoes conflicts

within central characters from an early Grace story "Parade," in Waiariki (1975) and from Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* (1985). Both writers used a metaphor of characters who come to see themselves through the eyes of outsiders, who experience disease, heaviness of spirit and a drift towards death but who ultimately reject the vision of themselves through outsiders' eyes and turn away from the distortion and trauma inherent in that vision and experience healing. Makareta fits this pattern as she finds renewal and new strength as a result of seeing with her own eyes. However, Grace stops short in *Cousins* of suggesting that only by looking at the world through indigenous or insider eyes can the discredited invalid colonial vision be avoided. Instead, Grace creates a chorus of voices and a host of eyes through which to present her most recent fiction—and no single one of them is offered as the insider view.

Grace's novels reveal a number of features of bilinguals' creativity. A close examination of some of those features and of the effects they have on analyses or interpretations of the literature gives testimony to the limitations of a European literary theory to explicate and evaluate literature written by bilinguals in a bilingual society. By exploiting creative innovations in her use of English as well as innovations in traditional Eurocentric fiction's narrative voice and structure, Grace has created an expression of Maori life and values in language that is only obliquely related to the Standard English of the colonizers.

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ABSTRACT: Fiction written by Pacific islanders began to emerge on the literary scene about 1970 and began to overwrite the perspectives and stereotypes that had characterized colonial narratives set in the Pacific written prior to that time. Pacific island writers adapted the Standard English code to create a new English with which to express their own cultures and identities in a language and a point of view different than those used by their colonizers. This writing adapts the Standard English code by incorporating such elements as untranslated vocabulary from indigenous languages and discourse elements from a pre-colonial oral tradition that include repetition, eulogy, and oratory. Important works of fiction by NZ Maori Patricia Grace--*Cousins* (1992) and *Baby No-Eyes* (1998)--exploit her innovations in language and the narrative structures of Standard English in order to tell her stories in the way that the older Maori people had of telling a story, a way where the beginning is not the beginning and the end is not the end. Grace celebrates difference and contests essentializing identities and social constructions of reality by creating powerful images of post-coloniality. Her work stands among the best fiction coming out of the Pacific for its power to transform one instrument of colonial domination into an instrument of creativity and liberation.